for Fine and Superfine varieties of Rice, which have now been categorised together.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

The Essential Commodities (Special Provision) Act, 1981

506. PROF. RAM KAPSE: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Act, 1981 which regulates the availability of foodgrains and prevents hoarding and black-marketing has lapsed;

(b) if so, the steps taken to revive it;

(c) whether any changes are contemplated in the said Act; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) The Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Act, 1981 has lapsed on 31.8.1997.

(b) to (d) The Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Ordinance, 1997 has been promulgated by the President on 3.10.1997 containing many of the provisions of the erstwhile E.C. (SP) Act, 1981 alongwith some amendments which include inter-alia, (i) restoration of right of appeal against confiscation order by the District Collector to the judiciary; (ii) making some offences bailable; and (iii) making the bail procedure simpler to conform to the normal CrPc Procedure.

Sugar Imported by Private Traders

507. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether sugar is being imported by private traders;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) how the foreign exchange in this is to be replaced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (c) Under the current EXIM Policy sugar is allowed to be imported under open general licence (OGL). The importers decide on the transactions based on commercial considerations. Outgo in foreign exchange on all imports is made up through accelerated exports for which measures are being continuously taken through appropriate changes in policies & programmes in consultation with trade & industry.

White Paper on Sugar Sector

508. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government was planning to prepare any White-Paper regarding the sugar sector; and

(b) if so, the reasons and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) No, sir.

(b) Question does not arise.

Decontrol of Sugar Approved by Committee of Secretaries

509. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Committee of Secretaries had approved a proposal to decontrol sugar;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the steps being taken in this regard; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Question does not arise.

Paddy procurement by FCI in current season

510. SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of paddy procured by the Food Corporation of India so far during the current season;

(b) whether the procurement has been according to the target;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the amount of paddy lost due to failure of FCI to procure it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (c) The procurement of paddy under price support scheme is totally voluntary in nature, as only the paddy offered by farmers conforming to prescribed specifications are purchased by FCI/State agencies. Hence, no targets are fixed for procurement of paddy.

A quantity of 71.24 lakh tonnes of paddy has been procured by the public procuring agencies for Central Pool upto 20.11.97 in the current Kharif Marketing Season 1997-98, which includes 29.37 lakh tonnes of paddy procured by FCI alone. During the last season, the quantity procured upto the same date, was 53.05 lakh tonnes.

(d) Dos not arise.

Villages not covered by PDS in Uttar Pradesh

511. SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are villages in Uttar Pradesh which are not covered by PDS as on 15th November, 1997;

(b) if so, the numbers thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the measures Government propose to take to bring them under PDS?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (c) Public Distribution System (PDS) is implemented under the joint responsibility of Central and State Governments. Central Government make available PDS commodities at Central Issue Prices to States/UTs. The operational responsibility for implementing the PDS rests with the State Governments/UT Administrations. Government of India do not maintain details of village-wise coverage under PDS.

Wheat import and low price for procured wheat to farmers

512. SHRI S.M. KRISHNA: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of wheat imported during last one year including the details of countries and the quantity imported, country-wise;

(b) whether Government are aware that FCI has paid very nominal price to the farmers for the wheat so procured from them and sold the same at higher price in open market;

(c) wheather Government are also aware that wheat has been exported at less price than import price;

(d) if answers to parts (b) and (c) are in affirmative, whether any enquiry has been conducted; and

(e) if so, the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) The details of